

**Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board**

**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020**

**Title of report: Kirklees Looked After Children Service (Children's Rights Team) Annual Report**

**Purpose of report: To inform the Board of services delivered by the Children's Rights Team during the period of 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.**

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not Applicable  If yes give the reason why
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u> ?	Not applicable  Private Report/Private Appendix – not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not Applicable  If no give the reason why not
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Tom Brailsford; 23/10/2020
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	N/A
Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a>	Cllr Viv Kendrick

**Electoral wards affected: Not applicable**

**Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable**

**Public or private: Public**

**Has GDPR been considered? Yes**

## 1. Summary

The Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights team) works collaboratively with Children's Social Care /Services to ensure that the voice of the child is heard and considered in respect of Local Authority policy development and service delivery. The service also offers advocacy support to children and young people aged ten and over when they are subject to a Child Protection plan.

The Children's Rights team deliver a number of other functions which include, supporting children and young people to use the Children's Complaints process and training them to be able to take part in the recruitment process for posts such as Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers. Children and young people are also trained to deliver their own training session to adults (Total Respect Training). This training helps adults to consider what the barriers are for participation of children and young people, and why it is important to listen to what children and young people say. Every child or young person who is new into care (or when they reach the age of 7 years old) receives an 'Initial Visit' from a Children's Rights team, Advocacy & Participation Worker, during which, children and young people are informed about the service and the support that they can receive from the team, as well as what participation opportunities they can become involved in.

Within the Children's Rights team, one full time Officer Co-ordinates the Independent Visitor's Scheme. This scheme matches children and young people with volunteers who spend time with the child or young person they are matched with; supporting and listening to them, as well as undertaking positive activities. A separate annual report is produced for this scheme which is included within the Children's Rights Annual Report at Appendix 2.

The report includes statistics showing how many children and young people have had involvement with the Children's Rights team during the reporting period; these continues to evidence an increase year on year.

## 2. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

## 3. Implications for the Council

### 3.1 Working with People

Not applicable

### 3.2 Working with Partners

The Service works with partners to deliver outcomes for children and young people, including within the Council and across the wider partnership

### 3.3 Place Based Working

Not applicable

### 3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

Not applicable

### 3.5 Improving outcomes for children

The Children's Rights team enable and work with children and young people who are Looked After by the local authority to help ensure that their voice is heard in relation to decisions that are made which affect their lives, and to ensure that service provision in general is influenced by the voice of children and young people.

It is important that children and young people feel that they are included in decisions which affect them and that their views are listened to. This can help lead to stability in their lives, overall health and wellbeing, higher attainment and long term positive outcomes for children and young people.

Through advocacy children and young people often achieve a positive outcome or a compromise regarding their requests. If it is not possible for the child or young person to have the outcome they desire their Advocate supports them in trying to understand the reasons why. Some specific examples of positive outcomes during 2019 to 2020 are given below:

- Placement stability
- Placement move agreed
- Young people's views taken into consideration with regard to placement
- A change of Social Worker agreed
- Keeping the same Social Worker agreed
- Allowances / savings clarified and received by the young people
- Family time increased or agreed and arranged as requested

**3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)  
Not applicable**

**4. Consultees and their opinions  
Not applicable**

**5. Next steps and timelines**

**Priorities over the next twelve months**

- To ensure that virtual methods of communication are developed and are used effectively with children and young people.
- To update social media platforms regularly with relevant and interesting information to enable the service to reach more children and young people.
- To develop a young people's Challenge project to be undertaken throughout the Covid-19 lockdown period to help maintain contact with children and young people.
- To increase the membership of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum and to also to develop virtual methods to help capture the views of children / young people who do not attend the groups, to influence service development and provision including those who live out of the Kirklees area.
- To increase the offer of advocacy support to children and young people aged ten and over, subject to a Child Protection plan.
- Development of the Independent Visitor Scheme
- To develop the Independent Visitor training package to make it relevant to delivering training to smaller groups / or individuals virtually.

**6. Officer recommendations and reasons**

That the report be noted

**7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

Not applicable

**8. Contact officer**

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**9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Not applicable

**10. Service Director responsible**

Tom Brailsford, Service Director – Resources, Improvements & Partnerships